

# 2016 Udemy Workplace Boredom Study

Battling Boredom Blues: How to Engage Today's Workers

**43%**

of U.S.  
office workers  
are bored



**80%**

feel learning new skills  
would make them  
more engaged



**2X**

Bored workers  
are 2x more likely  
to leave



# Top Reason Why Employees Are Bored? Lack of Learning Opportunities

Top-performing organizations are driven by high levels of employee engagement. Yet, engagement in the U.S. is at an eight-year low and remained stagnant in 2015, according to Quantum Workplace<sup>1</sup>. Business and HR leaders continue to lose sleep over this critical issue that impacts morale, retention, and business performance.

How can companies boost engagement and capture higher growth?

We sought answers to this question by surveying 1,000 U.S. full-time office workers to understand current levels of employee disengagement, some of the underlying causes, and how organizations can tackle this issue head-on.



## KEY TAKEAWAY

*The biggest driver of engagement is an employee's personal view of their future. Today's workers desire to be more involved in shaping their own experience in the workplace. Business and HR leaders must help people envision their future career and learning path in order to effectively engage them.*

<sup>1</sup>Quantum Workplace, 2016 Employee Engagement Trends: Among America's Best Places to Work, 2016.

## In this report, we take a closer look at:

- The most disengaged segments of the workforce
- The consequences of boredom at work
- The causes behind worker apathy
- How business and HR leaders can drive employee passion and enthusiasm through learning

# Boredom is a Leading Indicator of Disengagement

Boredom at work is an early warning sign of widespread disengagement that can negatively impact an organization's bottom line. "Actively disengaged employees cost the U.S. \$450 billion to \$550 billion in lost productivity per year," according to [Gallup](#).

However, if companies can address this indifference and boost engagement rates, they will reap the benefits of enhanced business performance. [Research by AON Hewitt](#) found that a 5% increase in employee engagement is linked to a 3% increase in revenue growth in the subsequent year.



## KEY TAKEAWAY

*Women, millennials, and entry to mid-level positions are the most bored and disengaged segments of the workforce.*

## Profile of today's disengaged worker

People in **entry to mid-level** jobs are **more bored (46%)** than those at senior levels



48%

39%

**Millennials** are nearly **2x** as likely to be bored at work than **baby boomers**



**43%** of U.S. office workers confessed they are bored or **disengaged at work**



**More women** are bored at work than men



**Over 51%** of bored workers felt this way for **more than half** of their work week

# The Consequence of Boredom? Your Employees Will Leave

A high incidence of boredom among segments of the workforce directly impacts performance, morale, and retention. 39% of surveyed employees called in sick to work due to boredom. 51% of employees say they often hear colleagues express feelings of boredom or disengagement. This can lead to a “contagion” effect with bored workers spreading their low morale to other team members. Moreover, our study revealed bored workers are twice as likely to jump ship than their non-bored colleagues. Replacing employees can be an expensive proposition for organizations. Employee turnover costs companies 16% of annual salary for low-paying jobs and up to 213% of annual salary for highly educated executives, according to the [Center for American Progress \(CAP\) study](#).

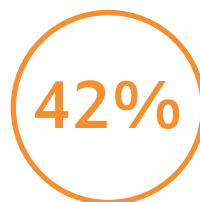
## Boredom drives employees away



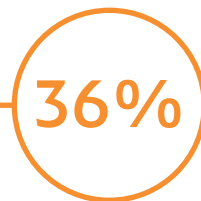
*Bored workers are 2 times more likely to leave a company than those who are not bored*

Bored employees

Non-bored employees



Likely to change jobs in next 3-6 months

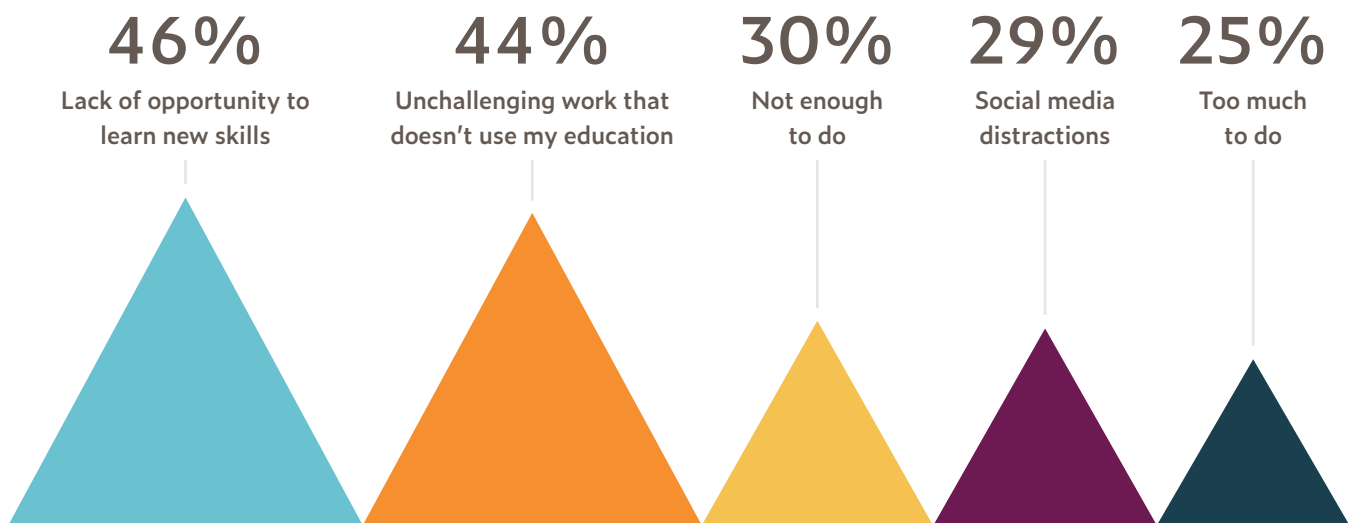


Boredom is a factor in the likelihood of changing jobs in next 3-6 months\*

\*For those likely to leave in next 3-6 months

# What's Causing Widespread Disengagement?

## Top reasons why employees feel bored at work\*



\*Respondents could select more than one option

### *The biggest driver of engagement is an employee's personal view of their future*

Future career opportunities and learning and development have consistently remained top engagement drivers for workers. "The majority of employees do not see a path forward with their organizations, and this has the strongest and most consistent impact on whether employees say, stay, and strive," [reports AON Hewitt](#).

As employees demand more from their workplace, business and HR leaders must help people shape their futures at the company.

A [2012 Harvard Business Review study](#) found that dissatisfaction with employee development efforts leads to early exits. Workers felt that companies generally satisfied their needs for on-the-job development but they did not receive enough future-oriented formal development, such as training, mentoring, and coaching—which they also value.

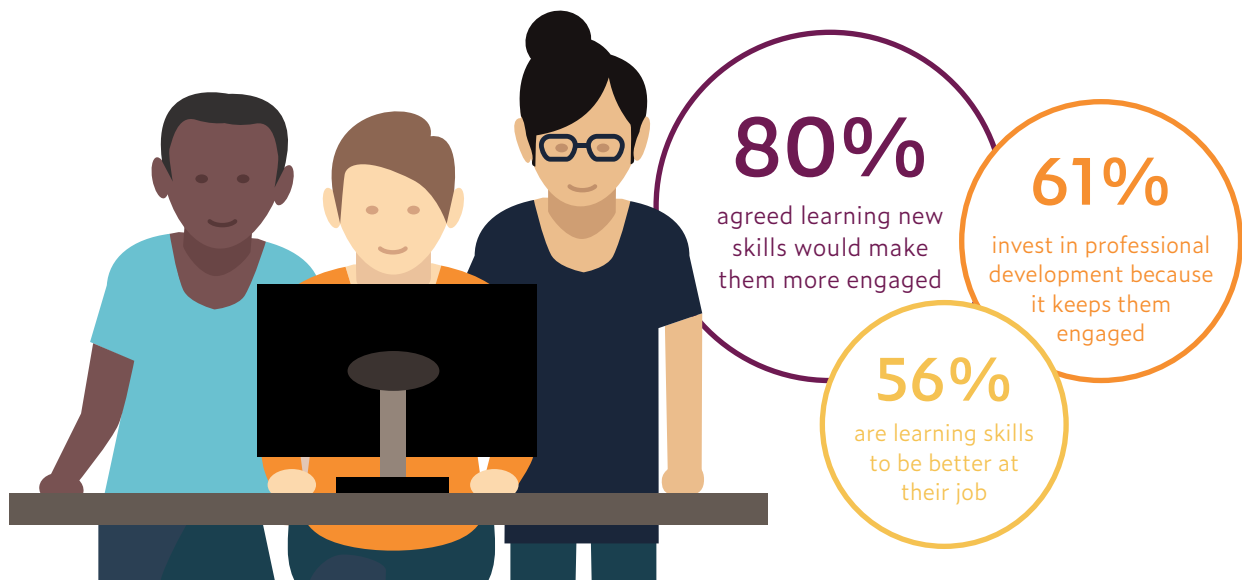
### KEY TAKEAWAY

*In short, boredom leads to low retention, which affects cost and business performance. Organizations can choose to invest in developing top performers who will add value to the business today and tomorrow, or risk losing them to growth opportunities elsewhere.*

# Tackle Workplace Boredom with Learning Opportunities

Employees want control of their own destiny. Organizations who help their people envision and realize a career development path will not only retain and engage their workforce, but also enhance productivity and business outcomes.

## Learning drives engagement



“Career opportunities matter. Today most companies are going through a ‘crew shift’ as boomer generation employees retire and millennials and young people enter management and high value positions. Younger folks are motivated by growth, career opportunity, and meaning,” according to Josh Bersin of *Bersin by Deloitte*.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

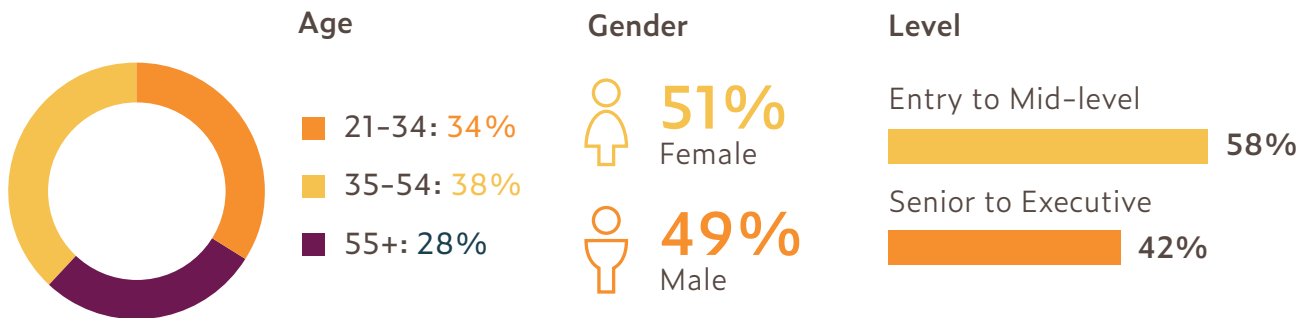
Corporate training and development programs should target the most bored segments of the workforce – women, millennials, and entry to mid-level positions – for the biggest impact on performance.



If leaders can tackle the root cause of boredom at work by helping their workers grow, organizations will boost engagement, lower retention, and ultimately increase their bottom line.

# Research Methodology

The survey was conducted online in the United States by Toluna Group, on behalf of Udemy for Business, with 1000 full-time office-workers in September 2016.



## About Udemy for Business

Udemy for Business is a curated learning platform that helps companies stay competitive in today's rapidly changing workplace by offering fresh, relevant on-demand learning that puts the learner at the center. Our mission is to help employees do whatever comes next- whether that's the next project, skill or role. We do this by curating 2,000+ of Udemy's top-rated courses taught by the world's leading experts on a variety of key topics ranging from development and IT to leadership, design and stress management. In addition to a curated content collection, organizations can also host and distribute their own proprietary content on Udemy.

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## About Toluna

Toluna is a leading provider of real-time digital consumer insights, and empowers companies to brainstorm ideas, uncover new business opportunities and answer their questions in real-time. Toluna is transforming the way marketing decisions are made by bringing consumers and brands together via the world's largest social voting community of millions of members across 59 countries. This real-time access to consumers is coupled with its state-of-the-art, market research survey and analytics platform. Toluna has 21 offices in Europe, North America, Asia Pacific and MENAP. For more information: [www.toluna-group.com](http://www.toluna-group.com).